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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the implementation of integrated intervention strategies to improve the classroom behavior of 30 third-grade students. Students' disruptive behavior was identified from two classroom observations, teacher questionnaires, and interviews with the school counselor. Objectives projected for the intervention were that students would: (1) show an increase in appropriate classroom behaviors; (2) receive improved ratings on teacher questionnaires; and (3) demonstrate a decrease in referrals to the counselor. The intervention program included the implementation of teaching strategies which focused on conflict resolution, effective communication, mutual responsibility, and development of positive self image. These strategies employed discussions, projects, and rewards. The program also included discussions led by experts in conflict resolution invited to the class; training of students as conflict mediators; and a class visit to a court in session to observe the process of the resolution of civil disputes. After 12 weeks, the objectives were evaluated by another series of classroom observations, teacher questionnaires, and interviews with the counselor. All three of the objectives were achieved. A 28-item reference list is provided. Appendixes include copies of the post-observation student behavior survey, teacher questionnaire, and school counselor interview question list. (BC)

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Improving the Behavior of Third Graders Using Integrated Teaching Strategies

by

Barbara F. Coakley

Cluster 38

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Practicum I Report presented to the
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for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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Approved:

8-28-91

Date of Final Approval of Report

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Georgianna Lowen, Ed.D., Advisor

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This writer would like to express loving thanks to her son, Andre, for his patience throughout this practicum. The writer's practicum adviser, Dr. Georgianna Lowen, deserves accolades for her gentle, yet expert guidance in writing this practicum. The writer is grateful to her school principal, Dr. Eduardo Rivas, and her assistant principal, Dr. Fred Albion for the encouragement and support given along the way. A final expression of appreciation goes to the writer's typist, Susan, who has been efficient and trustworthy from the beginning to the end of this practicum experience.

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ABSTRACT

Improving the Behavior of Third Graders Using Integrated Teaching Strategies. Coakley, Barbara F., 1991: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Discipline/Conflict Resolution/ Communication Skills/Self-Esteem Building/Elementary/ Education Strategies/Ethical Instructions/Values Education/ Affective Behavior/Attitudes/Behavior Management

This practicum was designed to improve the behavior of third grade students using integrated intervention strategies. The primary goal was to increase appropriate behaviors in the classroom. A secondary goal was to develop a community of individuals who care for and respect one another.

The writer implemented teaching strategies which focused on conflict resolution, effective communication skills, and the development of a positive self-image; invited conflict experts to lead discussions; selected and trained students as conflict mediators; and arranged a class visit to a court in session to observe means and methods employed to resolve civil disputes.

The results of the practicum were positive. All objectives were achieved successfully and one even surpassed projected expectations. This, also, indicated achievement of the basic premise underlying this practicum, the behavior of third graders can be improved by teaching strategies which focus on conflict resolution, effective communication skills, and the development of a positive self-image.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

This practicum was conducted in a public school system located in an urban area of a southern state. The school system has a population of over 300,000 students. The students are serviced in 163 school sites by approximately 20,000 employees. The overall student membership is comprised of 20 percent Non-Hispanic Whites, 33 percent Non-Hispanic Blacks, and 49 percent Hispanics. The socioeconomic make-up in the communities in the school district ranges from low-to-high income. The school system is run by a seven member school board of elected officials. These members represent all geographic sections of the district.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer's work setting is a public elementary school. The school covers 10 acres, is surrounded by towering green pine trees, and is considered the nucleus of the suburban middle-class community in which it is located.

The majority of the students in the school are from families in the middle-to-high socioeconomic level. The

citizens in the community consist of people employed in various businesses, the school system, and other professions.

The enrollment was approximately 800 students. The racial composition was 72 percent White, 14 percent Black, 11 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent Asian-American Indians. The faculty consists of approximately 45 teachers with an average of 12 years teaching. The regular program pupil-teacher ratio is 20:1. The non-instructional staff includes: aides, clerical, secretarial, and custodial personnel. The administration consists of one Principal, and one Assistant Principal. Faculty and staff work together to attain goals through shared decision-making or school-based management.

The school is built on the open-space concept, which enhances team teaching, individualized instruction, and/or flexible grouping. Academically, it is considered one of the best in the district. The median score in Reading and Math on the Stanford Achievement Test is the 80th percentile. Due to the socioeconomic status and the levels of achievement of 73 percent of the student population, the Comprehensive Education Program is the only funded remediation program. The average yearly attendance for students is 95 percent.

The educational program consists of basic K-5 education and exceptional education classes. Students enrolled are

in grades kindergarten through fifth. Approximately 40 learning disabled students are serviced by four teachers and three teacher aides. In addition, approximately 50 gifted students are taught by two teachers. A full-time guidance counselor and a part-time psychologist comprise the support staff.

The writer is one of five third-grade teachers whose major assignment is to teach all basic education subjects; excluding Art, Music, and Physical Education. The writer's educational background includes a Bachelor of Science degree in Education, and a Master of Science degree in Varying Exceptionalities. Teaching experience includes 19 years of teaching grades kindergarten through fifth and various Special Education classes.

The students involved in the target group were 30 third-graders. Twenty-seven of the students were performing on the third-grade level or above in reading and mathematics. A total of nine students attended Gifted Resource class and one student attended Learning Disabilities class on a part-time basis. The ethnic make-up of the class consisted of 23 Whites, five Blacks, and two Hispanics.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The writer echoed the public's concern regarding "disruptive behavior" of students, especially as the problem related to the writer's third-grade students.

The writer observed that these students were exhibiting a disproportionate amount of inappropriate classroom behaviors. A considerable amount of instruction time was spent disciplining disruptive students, which interfered with delivery of instruction. The students required an unusual number of reminders regarding school and class rules. Some were often reprimanded for disrespect of adults and other students. Conflicts such as bullying or name-calling often resulted in fights. Negative behavior reports were often received from the cafeteria monitor, and based on reports from other teachers who came in daily contact with these students, referrals to the office for discipline-related problems had increased. The severity of the problem was further evidenced when one of the students was suspended for intentionally throwing a rock and hitting the writer.

The problem in this practicum was that there were 30 third-graders whose behavior needed to be improved. If

this problem were solved, there would be fewer disruptions and interferences with delivery of instruction. In addition, student relationships with their peers would improve.

Problem Documentation

The existence of the problem in this practicum was documented by results of three instruments designed by the writer. The first were two one-hour observations of student behaviors (see Table 1). The writer observed the behavior of the students for a period of one-hour each, on different days, during Language Arts and Social Studies. Results of this observation showed that student disruptions totaled 71 during the one-hour observation during Language Arts. The results of the second observation during Social Studies revealed a total of 28 disruptions. These disruptions prevented a smooth classroom flow, and resulted in loss of teaching time and basic skill acquisition.

The existence of the problem was also documented by results of responses to questionnaires by four teachers who came in contact with the target group (see Table 2). The responses of these teachers substantiated the writer's concern that the behavior of the students needed to be improved. The results revealed that all four teachers thought that discipline problems hindered them in providing the best service to students. It was also reported that disproportionate non-academic times were spent with

Table 1

Results of Two One-Hour Observations of Student Behaviors

Observed Student Behavior	Number of Times Behaviors Observed	
	1st Hour Language Arts	2nd Hour Social Studies
1. Talks out of turn.	15	3
2. Leaves seat without permission.	6	2
3. Off task.	17	10
4. Disturbs others with noises.	9	2
5. Uses profanity.	1	0
6. Throws paper or pencil.	2	0
7. Steals/Damages property.	0	0
8. Makes fun of others.	4	2
9. Name calling.	1	1
10. Talks back to teacher.	3	2
11. Hitting others.	1	1
12. Leaves room without permission.	2	0
13. Pushes others in line.	6	4
14. Runs in room.	3	3
15. Lying.	1	0
Total Number Disruptions Observed =	71	28

Table 2

Results of Responses to Teacher Questionnaires

Number of Teachers = 4

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES	
	YES	NO
1. Do you think discipline problems hinder you in providing the best service to students?	100%	0%
2. Do you have disruptive students who interfere with overall class instruction?	100%	0%
3. Do you spend disproportionate non-academic times with disruptive students?	100%	0%
4. Have you referred students to the office for disruptive behavior?	100%	0%
5. Do you feel you must cope without adequate levels of support services?	100%	0%
6. Do you find that some of your students are habitual behavior problems?	75%	25%
7. Do you experience more disruptive classroom behavior in your class at present than you did five years ago?	75%	25%
8. Have you ever seriously considered leaving teaching because of student misbehavior?	25%	75%
	Very Serious	Fairly Serious	Not Serious
9. How do you rate the discipline problems in your class?	25%	75%	0%
10. How do you rate the discipline problems in this community?	0%	100%	0%

disruptive students, and students were often referred to the office for disruptive behaviors. All reported that they felt they sometimes had to cope without adequate levels of support services, and felt that discipline problems were fairly serious.

The problem was further documented by results of responses to an interview with the school counselor (see Table 3). The interview revealed that within the last three months a significant number of students in the target group had been referred to the office for discipline-related matters. It was revealed, also, that inappropriate behavior of students often hindered the learning process. The counselor reported more discipline-related referrals to the office at the present than five years ago.

Causative Analysis

The writer was of the opinion that there were several causes to this problem. One social factor which related to the cause was that 10 out of 30 of the students came from single-parent homes. The lack of a stable family created stress for children and made them less able to cope effectively with the academic and social demands of a school setting. The lives of some students were unstable, they came from troubled homes, and many of them were not getting the encouragement they needed to feel good about themselves.

Table 3

Results of Responses to Interview of School Counselor

1.	Approximately, how many third grade students have been referred to the office for discipline-related matters within the last three months?
	(Approximately fifteen third graders have been referred.)
2.	What type of student behavior problems are referred to your office?
	(Fighting, stealing or damaging property, and disrespect of adults.)
3.	List sources of referrals that are discipline related.
	(Teachers, cafeteria, and bus monitors.)
4.	What is your estimate of time per day you spend on discipline-related matters with target group?
	(Twenty-five percent.)
5.	Do most of the student behavior problems occur "in class" or "out of class"?
	(Problems occur equally in class and out of class.)
6.	Approximately, how many third grade students have been referred to the office for discipline-related matters within the last four months?
	(15.)
7.	Do you think inappropriate behavior of students hinders the learning process at this school?
	(Yes!)
8.	Do you experience more discipline referrals presently than you did five years ago?
	(Yes!)

A school factor which related to the cause of the problem was that students often attempted to satisfy personal needs for recognition and attention. A second school factor was the emotional tension which was caused by the school environment. Misbehavior was a strategy that students used to reduce the emotional tension. When faced with situations that created significant levels of frustration, boredom, excitement, or fear, students often responded by "acting-out" and disrupting the environment that created these emotions. Peer pressure at school was another causative factor. Relations with peers can produce emotions of excitement, thrill, or silliness in students, which had a tendency to disrupt the learning environment. Some students sought power, which resulted in a direct challenge to authority. These challenges often were not personal, and were usually directed at the role of authority that the teacher represented.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

The disruptive behavior of students has for many years been a major concern of teachers, administrators, and parents, and because of this much has been reported in the literature. Raffini (1980) defined disruptive behavior as any behavior considered by the teacher as interfering with maintaining a constructive learning environment.

According to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Panel on Moral Education

(1988), the moral education of children is one of the school's oldest missions and one of the newest issues of school reform. The ASCD Panel gave causes to a change of morality that can be attributed to the disintegration of the family; escalating public distress regarding honest practices in business; mass media; an affluent and materialistic society; and conflicting moral standards. Wayson and Pinnell (1982) are of the opinion that discipline problems in school can more often be traced to dysfunctions in the interpersonal climate and organizational patterns of the school, than to malfunctions in the individual.

Gallup and Elam (1990), in an opinion poll taken of the public's attitude toward public schools, ascertained that the public has become very much aware of the decline of moral standards. Karr-Kidwell (1987) surveyed teachers, parents, and community members. The consensus of each group is that discipline is one of the important problems facing the schools. Veeman (1984), in a study on problems listed by beginning teachers, shows classroom discipline first, followed by problems with motivating students.

Studies show that teachers spend considerable time managing students' behavior. To support these findings, a study by Wragg (1984) of 36 teachers observed during 213 lesson hours in classes of mixed ability, found that 54 percent of teachers' behavior involved management functions. In a study done by Gump (1987), it was found

that approximately half of teachers' actions involved instruction. The remainder of teachers' behavior involved such functions as organizing and arranging students for instruction.

Safran and Safran (1985) reported that their research shows that teachers believe that disruptive students interfere with classmates and overall class instruction. Teachers spend disproportionate non-academic time with these students and must cope without adequate levels of support from Special Education personnel.

Coles and Genevie (1990) in a research survey of individual boys and girls talked to students to see general trends and patterns of their beliefs on behavior. It was found that significant differences exist in the ways children think about what is morally right or wrong--based on their sex, race, social, or economic background.

A study by Koch and Miller (1987) found that conflict and controversy are a normal part of school children's maturation and socialization. Such conflicts, they found, can often be solved by the students themselves. Selman (1980) wrote that youngsters who are experiencing serious behavior problems have not learned the social skills or acquired the positive feelings about themselves that enable them to function effectively. Miller (1984) remarked that the goal of discipline is to help children build their

own self-control, not to have them behave through self-imposed control.

The literature showed that discipline problems are a symptom of what is happening to the rest of society. Lemire (1990) outlined the place of moral education in American schools and writes that public schools have not only the right, but the responsibility, to teach moral values, and the making of moral choices. Mamchak and Mamchak (1981) wrote that moral education affords students the opportunity to develop greater understanding and insight into their own feelings, feelings of others, and increases the self-esteem of students.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was that the classroom behavior of 30 third-grade students would improve. A secondary goal was a development of a community of individuals in the class, who care for and respect one another. It was also expected that students would realize that in order to work toward becoming productive citizens of school and in their future lives, they must learn to make appropriate choices, and learn to be in control of their behavior.

Behavioral Objectives

The following objectives were projected for this practicum:

Objective 1: At the end of 12 weeks, students, after having been instructed, will show an increase in appropriate classroom behaviors of at least one-third, as measured by the results of a post-observation survey.

Objective 2: At the end of 12 weeks, students, after having been instructed, will receive an improved rating of at least 20 points, as measured by the results of post-teacher response questionnaires.

Objective 3: At the end of 12 weeks, students, after having been instructed, will demonstrate a decrease from 15 to at least 8 student referrals, as measured by the results of a post-interview with the school counselor.

Measurement of Objectives

The objectives of this practicum were to be measured by the results of three measurement instruments. Objective one was to be measured by results of two, written, one-hour observations. This post-observation survey, designed by the writer, was to be used to show and record specific, observable classroom behaviors during a one-hour Language Arts and a one-hour Social Studies instructional block (see Appendix A).

The post-observation survey consisted of a list of typical disruptive behaviors which had been observed in the classroom, and a column in which observed behaviors could be tabulated. A tally was to be kept, by the writer, by placing a mark on the post-observation survey each time a student emitted the behaviors being observed. The post-observations were to be carried on a clipboard during the observation periods. An increase of at least one-third in appropriate behaviors would constitute improvement. The results were to be compared with results of the pre-observation surveys.

Objective two was to be measured by results of written post-questionnaire responses of four teachers, who came in contact with the target group on a daily basis (see Appendix B). The post-questionnaire, designed by the writer, consisted of ten questions based on the experiences of the teachers with discipline-related situations. The post-questionnaire consists of yes or no columns for answering eight of the questions. The last two questions were set-up to be answered as very serious, fairly serious, or not serious. An improved rating of at least 20 points in teacher responses would constitute success and expected improvement. The results were to be compared with results of the pre-questionnaire responses of teachers.

Objective three was to be measured by results of a post-interview with the school counselor (see Appendix C). The written instrument, designed by the writer, consisted of eight open-ended questions which related to the counselor's experiences with discipline-related situations and the target group. This objective would be achieved if the counselor reported a decrease from 15 to at least 8 student referrals for discipline-related problems. The data was to be reviewed and the results were to be compared with results of the pre-interview of the school counselor.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

The problem in this practicum was that the classroom behavior of 30 third-grade students needed to be improved.

Times have changed and will continue to change, along with society. The writer realized the importance of constantly investigating new avenues and approaches to new and effective methods of maintaining classroom discipline and control. It is important, too, that the methods be in tune with the needs of today's students and the structure of modern society. The literature offered many suggestions of successful classroom management methods.

Jones and Jones (1990) wrote that very few classroom teachers understand why problems exist or the relationship between the problem and their own professional behavior. Therefore, classroom management should be based on social understanding of current research and theory in classroom management and on students' personal and psychological needs. Another suggestion by Anderson (1981) was the creation of more desirable student behavior by concentrating on establishing positive, supportive classroom environments. Doing so would do much to meet the basic personal and psychological needs of children.

There were numerous methods proposed in the literature for solving the problem of disruptive behavior in the classroom. Safran and Safran (1985) described a model which emphasizes awareness and encourages peer group participation. Students are introduced to desensitization activities which are designed to identify problem behaviors and how disturbing a behavior is to a person. Self-rating activities and positive consequences of behaviors that are not considered disturbing are emphasized, also.

Using students as conflict mediators was suggested by several professionals. Koch and Miller (1987) stated that controversy and conflict are a normal part of children's maturation and socialization. Both writers advocated training students to mediate the conflicts of other students. Kahn (1989) found that mediation resolution offers a face-saving opportunity for both parties to find a solution without a winner or loser. The persons involved in the dispute are the ones who come up with eventual solutions to the problem.

Meyers (1990) advocated a cooperative learning model for building a sense of community in third grade students by emphasizing social skills that enhance communication and expand group cooperation. These skills included listening attentively, participating, encouraging, or disagreeing in an agreeable way. Schaps and Solomon (1990)

described a program, Child Development Project (CDP), which fosters the creation of a caring community within each school and each classroom. A feeling of belonging and contributing motivates children to attend to others, support them, and to work out compromises.

Suid and Holmes (1989) suggested the use of games to explore conflicts and cooperation. Students are introduced to the many forms of conflicts--personal, interactive, and global. The promoting of observation skills and logical thinking help motivate students to experiment with ways of controlling conflict in their lives. They also suggested inviting conflict experts such as police officers, counselors, psychologists, lawyers, or judges to visit classrooms and discuss ways of resolving conflicts.

Brophy (1985) advised the use of stimulation of self-guidance in students, by de-emphasizing the authority figure aspects of the teacher's role. Classroom rules should be developed in collaboration with students as a way to insure student commitment to the rules.

Nielsen (1984) suggested that by teaching self-management techniques, students can be discouraged from abandoning the responsibility of managing their own lives. Providing behavioral checklists helps students reach goals by identifying conduct of which they are not aware.

Maples (1985) believed in student self-discipline. He described a successful program involving 600 students

who had been introduced to techniques that facilitate self-discipline: self-assessment and self-recording, in the form of a journal or diary done in reflection of behavior.

Pepper and Henry (1985) suggested that students' use of responsibility could be developed through the use of group discussions. The group discussion takes the form of class meetings where the group talks and makes decisions concerning the operation of the classroom, discusses the actions and feelings, of group members, explore alternatives to help change behavior, and to encourage one another. The use of videotapes and audiotapes for resolving disputes and helping students "see" their own conduct, of which they are unaware, was also suggested.

Miller (1984) wrote that through problem solving children develop a sense of responsibility for their actions, understand others' needs, and strengthen their decision-making skills. The best discipline method, Miller wrote, is to encourage children to think of alternative solutions and possible effects of taking those alternatives.

Lemire, Nattiv, and Render (1989) recommended integration of effective communication skills and conflict resolution into the curriculum. Students need to be equipped with communication skills and cooperation skills to develop effective ways of co-existing in a peaceful manner at the present and in the future.

Parents are extremely important to young people and play a significant role in influencing their behavior. Jones and Jones (1990) reported that studies show that parents can have a major positive influence on their children's school behavior. Therefore, an effective classroom discipline system should include components for involving parents in a clear, consistent manner that has been clearly explained to the parents.

Evaluation of possible solutions that were reported in the literature indicated that there are behavior-management methods that had proven effective in the classroom. The literature, also, indicated that when these strategies are implemented in classroom settings characterized by supportive interpersonal relationships, these methods frequently have dramatic effects on students' behavior.

The writer believed that some of the solutions offered in the literature could be implemented with the target group and in the writer's work setting. The writer also believed that the solutions selected could assist in achieving the specific goals and objectives of this practicum. It was felt that these solutions could increase the number of appropriate classroom behaviors of the target group.

Description of Selected Solution

The literature provided several strategies or suggestions which, in the writer's opinion, could be used to improve the classroom behavior of students. Lemire, Nattiv, and Render (1989) suggested the integration of the teaching of effective communication skills and conflict resolution. Anderson (1981) recommended the use of strategies which focus on the development of a positive self-image which sets the pattern for utilization of decision-making processes. Koch and Miller (1987) proposed training students to mediate the conflicts of their classmates. Meyer (1990) advocated a cooperative learning model for building a sense of community in the students by emphasizing social skills that enhance communication and expand group cooperation.

The writer chose to employ the solution of integrating several teaching strategies which focused on effective communication skills, conflict resolution, and the development of a positive self-image. This solution was selected because the writer felt that these strategies were most appropriate and conducive to meeting the particular needs of the target group. It was the writer's opinion that students needed assistance in controlling their behavior. The selected solution would have a positive effect on the students in the classroom, and the use of these solutions would improve students' relationships with

peers. These solutions addressed the problem in this practicum and would achieve the stated objectives.

This practicum was implemented for a period of 12 weeks, in the writer's classroom, at the writer's work location. Evaluation of objectives took place 12 weeks from the day that implementation began. The writer's role was that of teacher during instruction period, and as facilitator during discussion periods.

Permission to implement this practicum was obtained from the school principal. Materials and supplies used consisted of the usual school supplies such as pencils, writing paper, crayons, glue, construction paper, and scissors. Children's books needed for lessons were obtained from the library, located at the work location.

Report of Action Taken

The implementation of the solution strategies for this practicum began after receiving approval to begin the implementation in March 1991. After the approval was obtained, the writer met with the principal, the school counselor, and the teachers who come in daily contact with the target group, to discuss the strategies which would be used to improve the behavior of the students. All pledged their support and permission was granted by the principal. Implementation began the first week of April 1991.

The solution strategy for this practicum began with the writer explaining the classroom management program to the target group. An appointment was made to visit the County Courthouse to observe the process through which conflicts may be resolved. Parental support was obtained, after informing them by a parent letter, of the goals and objectives of the program (Appendix D).

The second step of the implementation began with explaining the "Lunch Bunch" behavior-change incentive strategy. Each student received a My Award Point Sheet (Appendix E). It was explained that the students who earned at least 20 points for the month for good citizenship would become members of the "Lunch Bunch" for the month and would have an opportunity to have lunch with the teacher and/or the principal as a reward. It was further explained that individuals and the class as a group could earn extra points when observed "doing something good". The first point given, in this self-esteem improvement strategy, was for returning signed response notes from parents.

The third step of the implementation strategy involved conflict resolution. A pretest from Schmidt & Friedman (1985) was administered to see how students handle conflict. These pretests were held until the end of the implementation period so students could evaluate their progress in dealing with conflict. Students began a conflict notebook and

were encouraged to personalize it with art, poetry, cartoons, creative writing, etc.

The fourth step of the solution strategy was class discussions which emphasized that everyone is responsible for the kind of world we live in and peaceful actions begin with the individual. Students created a bulletin board with art work entitled, "The World I Want to Live In". Students learned the lyrics to "Let Peace Begin With Me".

The fifth step of the implementation strategy was the selection and training of student mediators. Emphasis was on controversy and conflict as a normal part of children's maturation and socialization. It was explained that mediation resolution offers a face-saving opportunity for both parties to find a solution without a winner or loser. The persons involved in the dispute were the ones who came up with eventual solutions to the problem.

The sixth step of the solution strategy was discussion sessions which focused on communication skills. The importance of listening to others, from Palomares (1982), was used. Rules of listening to others were formulated by the class. Students were given the opportunity to explore themselves, share their feelings genuinely, and listen to and observe others.

The seventh step of the implementation strategy included self-esteem improvement strategies. A discussion of the Cause-Effect law of nature was held which emphasized

that everyone has a choice of feelings in response to a given solution. Role-play mock situations where an emotional response is followed by a thought were presented. Students wrote a list of things they could do to make life easier for their family.

The eighth step of the solution strategy was discussion of conflicts existing at all levels from individual to international. Issues that cause conflict in community, state, and/or nation were brainstormed by the students. Students' responses were listed on the board and classified as internal, between people, between groups, or nations. Stories such as "Cinderella", "Stone Soup", and other related stories which had examples of conflicts were read to the class and discussed.

The ninth step of the implementation involved presentations by three conflict experts and weekly discussions by the school counselor which focused on the concept of fighting fair, using self-control, and ways in which conflicts could be handled fairly and constructively. Rules for fighting fair were discussed, including the goal of fighting fair, which is to make everyone a winner.

The tenth step of the solution strategy included a field trip to visit a court in session, to observe means and methods employed to resolve civil disputes. Students were given a better understanding of the rights and

responsibilities of people as they conduct their daily lives in interaction with others.

The eleventh and on-going step of the implementation strategy involved three monthly luncheons with the writer and/or principal for students who earned at least 20 points for good citizenship by the end of the month. These occasions served as positive reinforcement for behavior improvement.

The final step of the solution strategy included student assessment. A post-test was administered to assess how well students handled conflict and compared with the pre-test. Each child was then able to see his/her own progress and evaluate it. The post-interview evaluation was given to the school counselor and the post-questionnaires were given to four teachers. The instruments were returned and examined to reveal any improvements. The writer then observed the target group for one hour during Social Studies and one hour during Language Arts. The results of the post-evaluation instruments were evaluated and compared to the pre-evaluation instruments. Outcomes of practicum implementation were analyzed.

During the three month implementation of this practicum two unexpected events occurred which caused a change in scheduled plans. A problem occurred when one of the four conflict experts, originally planned to come in to speak

to the students, could not be obtained. The school counselor came to the rescue by volunteering to come for thirty minutes each week to lead discussions in conflict resolution. Another unexpected event arose when the scheduled field trip, for Week 5, to visit court in session, had to be rescheduled for Week 12. Overall, no significant deviations occurred which hampered implementation of this practicum.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem that existed was that the writer's third grade students were exhibiting a disproportionate amount of inappropriate classroom behaviors. A considerable amount of instruction time was spent disciplining disruptive students, which interfered with delivery of instructions. The students required an unusual number of reminders regarding school and class rules. There were several causes to this problem. One social factor, which related to the cause of the problem was that some of the students lacked a stable family, which created stress for the children and made them less able to cope effectively with the social elements of a school setting. Many were not getting the encouragement they needed to feel good about themselves. A school factor which related to the cause of the problem was that students attempted to satisfy personal needs for recognition and attention which often resulted in misbehavior.

The solution to this problem was to integrate several teaching strategies which focused on effective communication skills, conflict resolution, and the development of a positive self-image. This solution was selected because

the students needed assistance in learning to control their behavior and these strategies were most appropriate and conducive to meeting the particular needs of these students. The selected solution would also have a positive effect on the students in the classroom and would improve students' relationships with their peers, teachers, and family members.

The goal of this practicum was that the behavior of 30 third graders would improve. The goal would be obtained by application of a combination of conflict resolution strategies, effective communication skills, and strategies which focused on the development of a positive self-image.

Specific objectives were designed to achieve the goals. The following list includes each objective and the results related to each objective.

Objective 1: It was projected that at the end of the 12-week implementation period, there would be an increase in the number of specific, observed appropriate classroom behaviors, of at least one-third, as measured by the results of a post-observation survey. Table 4 shows the results of this objective as compared to observed student behavior prior to application of solutions strategies.

A review of the post-observation of student behaviors revealed an increase in the number of observed appropriate

classroom behaviors. As projected, the students' average level of appropriate behaviors increased by one-third. Appropriate behaviors were strengthened and increased in frequency, while those behaviors that were inappropriate became weak and were eventually decreased or extinguished. The goals of the objective were achieved.

Table 4

Comparison of Two One-Hour Observations of Student Behaviors*

	Inappropriate Behaviors Before Intervention	Inappropriate Behaviors After Intervention
1st Hour - Language Arts	71	20
2nd Hour - Language Arts	28	3

* After three-month implementation period.

Objective 2. It was projected that at the end of the 12-week implementation period, there would be an improved rating of at least 20 points, as measured by the results of post-teacher response questionnaires. Table 5 shows the results of this objective as compared to the teacher responses prior to application of solution strategies.

Results of responses of teachers on the post-teacher questionnaire showed an improved rating of 23 points as

compared to results of the pre-teacher response questionnaire. The projected goal of this objective was achieved.

Table 5

Comparison of Responses to Teacher Questionnaire

(Number of Teachers = 4)

Questions	Yes - Before Intervention	Yes - After Intervention
	Points	Points
1. Do you think discipline problems hinder you in providing the best service to students?	4	0
2. Do you have disruptive students who interfere with overall class instruction?	4	1
3. Do you spend disproportionate non-academic times with disruptive students?	4	0
4. Have you referred students to the office for disruptive behavior?	4	0
5. Do you feel you must cope without adequate levels of support services?	4	0
6. Do you find that some of your students are habitual behavior problems?	3	0

(table continues)

Questions	Yes - Before Intervention	Yes - After Intervention
	Points	Points
7. Do you experience more disruptive classroom behavior in your class at present than you did five years ago?	3	0
8. Have you ever seriously considered leaving teaching because of student misbehavior?	1	0
9. How do you rate the discipline problems in your class?	Before Intervention: Very Serious = 1; Fairly Serious = 1	After Intervention: Very Serious = 0; Fairly Serious = 1
10. How do you rate the discipline problems in this school?	Before Intervention: Very Serious = 0; Fairly Serious = 1	After Intervention: Very Serious = 0; Fairly Serious = 0
Total Points	28	5

Objective 3. It was projected that at the end of the 12 week implementation period students would demonstrate a decrease from 15 to at least 8 students, who were referred, as determined by results of responses to an interview with the school counselor. Table 6 shows the results of this objective as compared to student referrals to the school counselor for discipline related problems prior to application of solution strategies.

Results regarding Objective 3, of a post-interview with the school counselor revealed a decrease from 15 to zero for the number of students who had been referred to the office for discipline-related problems. The goal of this objective was achieved in that no students were referred to the office, which showed to be more successful than had been projected.

Table 6

Comparison of Student Referrals to School Counselor*

	Before Intervention	After Intervention
Number of referrals to office for discipline-related matters within the last 3 months	15	0

* After 3-month implementation period.

Discussion

A review and interpretation of the data collected indicated that all three objectives were achieved. This also indicated achievement of the basic premise underlying this practicum, the behavior of third graders can be improved by integrating several teaching strategies which focus on self-management. The results confirmed the writer's expectations that by incorporating motivating activities such as communication skills, conflict resolution, and the development of a positive self-image, the behavior of students would improve. A review of the literature showed several studies which proved to be effective using these same strategies.

Studies done by Lemire, Nattiv, and Render (1989) proved successful and revealed that it is helpful to integrate effective communication skills and conflict resolution strategies. Encouraged, also, was the use of cooperative learning strategies which focus on group interaction skills. The conclusions of a study done by Raffin (1980) revealed the success of education curriculum which affords students (especially primary students) the opportunity to develop a greater degree of understanding and insight into their own feelings, into the feelings of others, and which increases students' self-esteem. Focusing on a positive self-image was found, by Anderson

(1982), to set the pattern for utilization of decision-making processes which are necessary from day to day. Based on the results of the practicum, the writer concludes that similar positive results were achieved.

Several implications are obvious as a result of the success of this practicum. First, the writer believes teaching social problem-solving interventions, which focus on helping children gain an understanding of social situations and plan strategies for dealing with problematic situations they may encounter, will help to improve children's behavior.

Second, peers can exert a powerful influence on other children's behavior. The writer believes that the peer-mediated reinforcement program is helpful in changing students' disruptive behavior. Using students as student mediators helps to promote positive interaction among students by requiring them to work together to complete tasks. This therapy provides opportunities for them to share, exhibit cooperative behavior, and assist in achieving a common goal. This helps to improve the behavior of the entire class.

Third, reinforcement techniques such as "Lunch Bunch" and other rewards for positive behavior teach children new skills, help to eliminate undesirable behavior or motivate children to engage in positive behavior that may already be in their repertoire but were not being performed

at acceptable levels. Another implication is the rate of social interaction of the withdrawn children will significantly increase as they are provided more opportunities to share and discuss their feelings with peers. The final implication, in addition to being time efficient and easy to implement, is the lunch with the principal intervention, which provides the principal with the opportunity to assume a role as a reinforcing agent, rather than as just a disciplinarian.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that sufficient time be allowed for the intervention to be fully implemented for desired outcomes to be achieved.

2. It is recommended that in order to increase appropriate behavior, all children who meet a certain criterion, should be given a chance to participate in reward activities. Teacher discretion is imperative to ensure that all students experience some success early in the program.

3. It is recommended that teachers praise individuals and the class as a group for exhibiting appropriate behavior. Make an effort to "catch them doing something good".

4. It is recommended that this program, which focuses on conflict resolution, communication skills, and self-esteem building strategies, be implemented and continued on a regular basis for all students.

Dissemination

As a result of the effectiveness of this practicum, the writer has decided to continue with the plan and to extend the intervention to other classes. The school counselor will be given specific outcome data and information about the implications for implementation. The writer will make available and share the practicum with the school faculty, especially other third grade teachers. The school PTA will receive a general discussion of the program and its benefits.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

POST-OBSERVATION OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR SURVEY

Observation - Behavior Monitoring

Class: Mrs. Coakley - Grade 3 Observation Start Time: 10:45

Date: _____ Observation Stop Time: 11:45

Activity: Language Arts Total Observation Time: 1 Hr.

OBSERVED STUDENT BEHAVIORS	TALLY	# TIMES OBSERVED
1. Talks out of turn.		
2. Leaves seat without permission.		
3. Off task.		
4. Disturbs others with noises.		
5. Uses profanity.		
6. Throws paper or pencil.		
7. Steals/Damages property.		
8. Makes fun of others.		
9. Name calling.		
10. Talks back to teacher.		
11. Hitting others.		
12. Leaves room without permission.		
13. Pushes others in line.		
14. Runs in room.		
15. Lying.		

These are the kinds of behaviors that interfere with delivery of instruction.

Total # Disruptions Observed =

Observation - Behavior Monitoring

Class: Mrs. Coakley - Grade 3 Observation Start Time: 10:45

Date: _____ Observation Stop Time: 11:45

Activity: Social Studies Total Observation Time: 1 Hr.

OBSERVED STUDENT BEHAVIORS	TALLY	# TIMES OBSERVED
1. Talks out of turn.		
2. Leaves seat without permission.		
3. Off task.		
4. Disturbs others with noises.		
5. Uses profanity.		
6. Throws paper or pencil.		
7. Steals/Damages property.		
8. Makes fun of others.		
9. Name calling.		
10. Talks back to teacher.		
11. Hitting others.		
12. Leaves room without permission.		
13. Pushes others in line.		
14. Runs in room.		
15. Lying.		

These are the kinds of behaviors that interfere with delivery of instruction.

Total # Disruptions Observed =

APPENDIX B

POST-TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRES

QUESTIONNAIRE - TEACHERS

_____
Teacher

_____
Date

Please answer based upon your experience in this school.

	YES	NO
1. Do you think discipline problems hinder you in providing the best service to students?	___	___
2. Do you have disruptive students who interfere with overall class instruction?	___	___
3. Do you spend disproportionate non-academic times with disruptive students?	___	___
4. Have you referred students to the office for disruptive behavior?	___	___
5. Do you feel you must cope without adequate levels of support services?	___	___
6. Do you find that some of your students are habitual behavior problems?	___	___
7. Do you experience more disruptive classroom behavior in your class than you did five years ago?	___	___
8. Have you ever seriously considered leaving teaching because of student misbehavior?	___	___

9. How do you rate the discipline problems in your class?

_____ _____ _____
Very Serious Fairly Serious Not Serious

10. How do you rate the discipline problems in this community?

_____ _____ _____
Very Serious Fairly Serious Not Serious

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW OF SCHOOL COUNSELOR

INTERVIEW - SCHOOL COUNSELOR

_____
Name

_____
Date

Please answer based upon your experiences in this school.

1. On the average, how many students are referred to the office daily for behavior problems?

_____
_____

2. What type of student behavior problems are referred to your office?

_____
_____

3. List sources of referrals that are discipline related.

_____
_____

4. What is your estimate of time per day you spend on discipline-related matters?

_____
_____

5. Do most of the student behavior problems occur "in class" or "out of class"?

_____
_____

6. Approximately, how many third grade students have been referred to the office for discipline-related matters within the last four months?

_____
_____

7. Do you think inappropriate behavior of students hinders the learning process at this school?

8. Do you experience more discipline referrals than you did five years ago?

Appendix D

Letter to Parents

March 15, 1991

Dear Parents,

With school well under way, I'd like to thank you for your continued support this year, and to inform you of a classroom management program of which I am very excited. As some of you might know, I am presently pursuing a Doctorate Degree in Youth and Child Studies at Nova University. One component of the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies is a practicum which requires one to identify a problem that exists in the work setting, to propose a plan to solve the problem, to implement solution strategies, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the solution. A practicum is a practical experience in systematic problem-solving designed to result in positive change.

According to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Panel on Moral Education, the moral education of children is one of the school's oldest missions and one of our newest issues of school reform. ASCD, in a national survey of teachers, parents, and community members, report that each group agrees that discipline is one of the important problems facing the schools. I realize the importance of constantly investigating new avenues and approaches to new and effective methods of maintaining classroom discipline and control.

In a few weeks I will be implementing a classroom management program which includes the integration of several teaching strategies. These strategies will focus on the use of effective communication skills, conflict resolution, and the development of a positive self-image. At the end of the implementation period of 12 weeks, I expect that there would have been a development of a community of individuals in our class, who care for and respect one another. It is also expected that the students will realize that in order to work toward becoming productive citizens of school and in their future lives, they must learn to make appropriate choices, and learn to be in control of their behavior.

Parents are extremely important in children's education and play a significant role in influencing their behavior. I commend the parents of each child represented in my class for doing your part in helping to make this year a success for your child, and me, too!

Sincerely,

Barbara F. Coakley

APPENDIX E

"LUNCH BUNCH" - POINT SHEET

APPENDIX E